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xix.

even when it appears, the truth
can be ignored—one can close

one's eyes to it, see what
is not there—transform it

into one's own image: each label
promising love, liquid swishing

in the glass tempting as hips,
tongue receiving its first taste,

a kiss, natural and fulfilling.
one becomes a living

inversion: stagger appears
as graceful walk, fury

a version of love, slurred
words electric speech. we do not

blame the moon, which appears
to brighten the sky by itself.

we know better. it is the same
with our father, as incapable

of generating his own light
as we are of looking away.

xxi.

we didn't know him except
he was our father, now sober

enough to hold a job. we trudged
to work with him on his weekends,

pizza papa, stretched and slung
dough, suffered the rain of flour

until we became ghosts or angels.
at 2 A.M., we answered late-night

goodbyes of the regulars
with small silent waves: good night.

you girls look so much like
your father. you should be proud of him.

we drove home in the dark,

hunched in the back seat. up front,

his head far above us, face
lit up by passing streetlights.

we rode in his shadow. looked only
to him, just as he needed us to.

Tracy Youngblom

Tracy Youngblom is the author of *Driving to Heaven*, a chapbook; *Growing Big*, a full-length poetry collection; and *One Bird a Day*, a forthcoming chapbook. Individual poems and essays have appeared recently in journals such as *Wallace Stevens Journal*, *Big Muddy*, *Foliate Oak*, *Cumberland River Review*, *Qu Literary Journal*, and other places.